

Earneſt Perſuaſions ³

To receive the

LORD JESUS CHRIST,

And become SUBJECT to HIM.

Extracted from a late Treatiſe of the

Rev. *John Rawlet*, B. D.

By *H. VENN*, A. M.

Fellow of Queen's College, Cambridge.

*He came unto his own, and his own received him not.
But to as many as received him, to them gave he
Power to become the Sons of God. John i, 11, 12.*

L O N D O N :

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James P. ...

To ...

LORD JESUS CHRIST

And become ...

...



B. D.

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Printed in the Year ...

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 PERSUASIONS, &c.

1. **C**ONSIDER I am only persuading you to be Christians, which you profess yourselves to be.

And will you not be indeed what you profess? Why do you embrace the name, if you dislike the thing? I know you have false measures, whereby you judge of Christianity, and think, perhaps, that all who are baptized, and keep their church, and call themselves Christians, are so indeed: But you should rather say, such profess themselves so to be; but they are not so in God's account, except they are true to this profession. He that wears a nobleman's livery, seems to be his servant, but unless he acknowledges him to be his master, by doing what he commands, you will scarce say such a man is his servant; however, not a servant to be maintained, but cashiered and punished. And if you are but such kind of Christians, is was as good you were open infidels. You cannot think it enough to prove a man

your friend, that he calls you so, and gives you fine words, and promises great things, and mean time does all he can to hurt you. Even thus hath the Lord Jesus Christ decided the case, and told us who are his *friends*, not they who only speak honourably of him, and pretend great esteem of him ; no, but they who do, what he *commands them*, Joh. xv. 14. If you will not do thus, you may easily be convinced, that your Christianity will not place you with the friends of Christ, but leave you among his enemies ; and so will do you little service.

Wherefore he only is a Christian who receives the Lord Jesus Christ in all those relations, in which he is represented in the Gospel, and is willing to perform the duties that these relations bind him to. And to such a receiving of Christ I am urging you. Can you be Christians without taking Christ for your Lord ? And can you do this without you are governed by him ? Is he a disciple of Christ, that will not learn of him ? To give an Instance or two : Christ bids you to be meek and lowly ; if you will not do thus, are you indeed his disciples ? He tells you his yoke is easy, and his burthen light, and therefore requires you to take them on you ; if you think them hard and heavy, and therefore reject them, do you not in effect give him the lye ? He tells you
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He is the author of eternal Salvation to those that obey him ; if you refuse obedience to Him, and yet pretend you hope to be saved by Him, can you call this believeing on Him? When he would redeem you from your iniquities, and you will not part with them, do you take him for your Redeemer? So that it is evident you are not really, in God's account, Christians. except you are willing to be guided by Christ to happiness in the way which he hath revealed; wherefore you must see to come up to this, or be judged of God as heathens and infidels, and accordingly dealt with.

2. Consider seriously what a most kinde sign it is that the Lord Jesus Christ comes to you upon, and judge whether it is not most reasonable to comply with Him. He offers himself to be your Saviour, and what can you say why you should not close with this offer; Examine what hurt there is in that work of Christ upon your Souls, against which you are most prejudiced. Jesus Christ would take off your affections from earthly things that cannot satisfy them, and set them on things above, which will prove a durable portion. He would cure the blindness, brutishness, and deadness of your souls, and raise you to the greatest liberty of mind and to the most reasonable excellent life. whereof you are capable. He would bring

you out of darkness into light; from pain and grief to the most manly joys; he would deliver you out of the noise and tumult of your foolish desires and passions, and settle you in a sweet and steady *peace*; instead of being useless to God and man, and destroyers of yourselves, he would make you serviceable in your generation, and your own truest friends, I speak of the *present* effects of his grace upon your souls in delivering you from the dominion of sin and Satan, under whose tyrannous power Christ finds you; for certainly to be thus enslaved is the greatest misery that can at present befall you, as it debases and defiles you, and puts you out of that order in the creation which God placed you in. Nothing in all the world can be so much disgrace to you as this; for of reasonable creatures, you are hereby like brutes, and in some sense worse; and instead of the image of God, you bear the image of the devil, through your love to sin and enmity to holiness. And do you think there is no hurt in all this? No, not in becoming ideots and fools, living contrary to, and below your *reason*? In being like the devil, whom you pretend to abhor? Is it no dishonour to you to have Him to be your father? Such he is whilst you do his works. Well then, you have nothing, I hope, to say against the Lord Jesus Christ, who comes to recover you

you to yourselves, to bring you into your right senses, to shew you your former folly, so as to make you ashamed of, and humbled for it, that you may forsake it; whose design is to raise you to the original privilege and dignity of your nature, by repairing God's image, which you have lost; by bringing you to love that which is best for you, to beware of what would hurt you, and to be weaned from those things that will leave you and cannot make you happy. Now if you have nothing to object against all this, much less can you quarrel with his design to keep you from misery, and make you blessed for ever, if you will hearken to him: Where then does the matter stick? What can hinder you from receiving the Lord Jesus Christ, who comes only to take off your load, and give you ease and rest.

3. Consider what Christ has undergone to make your peace with God. He became poor to make you rich. He became the son of man that you might be sons of God; He came down from heaven to raise you thither: He entered into combat with the devil that you might be enabled to conquer him. He bore the worst the world could do, and overcame all its assaults, that you by him might overcome the world. He drank the bitter cup, the dregs whereof you had otherwise been drinking eternally. When the sword
of

of Justice was ready to sheath itself in your bowels, He came betwixt and received it into his own. He willingly gave up himself to the death, that bitter, cruel, shameful death, that your souls might live for ever. He bore your sins that they might not lye on you as an heavy load to sink you into the lowest hell. He was made a curse that you might escape it, and obtain a blessing.

And after all this that the Lord Jesus Christ has done and suffered, will you reject Him? Has He done so much in order to your deliverances, and shall all be lost to you, as if it had never been done? What, hath the son of God, manifest in the flesh, shed his warmest heart's blood to be a balsam for your wounded souls, and are you not willing it should be applied? methinks common ingenuity should tell you such matchless love as this should not be slighted. If you were taken captive by the Turks, and a dear friend should venture his life to free you, sure you would be willing to return with him, though you might have great offers to stay behind, if it was for nothing else but to gratify your friend who had ventured so hard for you. And what shall the blood of Christ be, as it were, spilt on the ground and have no effect on thee? How hard is that rock whom this will not soften? Think, oh! think, I beseech thee, what the Lord

Jesus

Jesus Christ has gone through to deliver thy soul from the jaws of death, and then say, whether it be just and reasonable that He should be rejected of thee. Let me intreat thee to imagine that thou sawest Jesus now before thee all in blood, calling thee to him, as He once did *Thomas*, bidding thee to thrust thy hands into his side, and put thy fingers into the points of the nails, and suppose thou hearest him saying to thee, *Look here thou sinner, behold these tokens of my love; see what I have endured on your behalf: Oh! be not faithless but believing; be not perverse and obstinate to reject me, who have felt so much pain to procure thy ease; cast away those sins which have used me thus; trust thyself with me who have given such costly evidences of my love towards thee; accept me for thy redeemer, who have paid such a price for thee; own me for thy Lord, who have thus bought thee out of slavery; follow me in the way that I shall shew thee, that I may bring thee safe to the presence of the Father, whom I have reconciled to thee.*

Suppose, I say, thou shouldst see the Lord Jesus Christ covered with his own blood, and hear him importuning thee to forsake thy sins, and accept of his grace and mercy, what wouldst thou say? What answer would you give? Could you find in your heart to despise Him, to stop your ears to his request,

to

to go away without regarding Him? Or
 would you tell Him he had not done enough
 to engage you to Him? that you saw no rea-
 son why you should hearken to his offers, and
 that your sins were far more sweet and
 precious than grace and glory, or any thing
 that he could give? Surely you would not
 make such an answer. If not, then let not
 thy heart and practice return the very same
 answer to me, who, in *the name and stead*
of Christ, beseech thee that thou wilt through
 Him be reconciled to GOD: Even by all
 those wounds the Lord Jesus suffered upon
 the cross, by all those pangs which he felt in
 his soul, by his cries and groans, by his tears
 and blood, I do, as upon my knees, be-
 seech thee, give an hearty entertainment to
 the Lord Jesus Christ, who was thus cruci-
 fied and wounded for thee; Oh! let him
 see in thee the travail of his soul, and be sa-
 tisfied. No longer cherish those sinfull de-
 sires which resist his entrance, off with those
 bars and bolts that have locked Him out,
 down with those strong holds that have
 stood out against Him, let the gates of thy
 heart fly open, and let this king of glory
 come in; most thankfully receive him, ab-
 solutely render thyself up to him, to be dis-
 posed of as he shall think fit, only begging
 that thou mayest be taken into the number
 of his redeemed ones, be enabled to perform
 the duties enjoined them, and be fitted to

enjoy the glorious privilege of being saved; this is that faith in Christ, which I would so fain persuade thee to, that thro' it, thou mightest be pardoned and saved.

4. Consider what a most reasonable condition the Lord Jesus Christ hath appointed thee, that thou mightest obtain eternal salvation by Him; even thy unfeigned willingness to accept Him for thy Redeemer and thankfully to receive the benefits which he hath purchased for thee. And will not this induce thee to enter into covenant with Him, when the terms thereof are so fair and gracious? This thy hearty consent, *that the Lord Jesus Christ shall perform the whole office of a Saviour to thee and for thee*, is all that is required of thee, to make thee one of his members. This is the great command of the gospel, *Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ*, so that you can have nothing to say in your own behalf, if you should be found at last to have neglected this command; for tell me, could you have desired any thing more favourable? If you had been enjoined some great thing, would you not have done it? Much more now you are only required to be willing to have Christ and life with Him? But remember the offices of Christ must not be divided, nor His benefits separated; he must be received as thy Lord, to rule in thy heart, and govern thy life, as well

to keep thee from misery,
and you must be as willing to feel in thy soul
the power of his cross crucifying thy sins, as
the merit of his cross procuring thy pardon.
You must be brought to the love of heaven
above earth now, if you would be received
there by Christ when you leave this world:
Yet in all this it is but the consent of your
soul which is required, in order to the at-
tainment of the offered mercies. And would
you have matters brought down lower yet?
Would you be saved against your will, and
and hauled to heaven when your heart is a-
gainst it; or would you have such kind of
exceptions as these, put in with the terms
of thy salvation? *That you may have liberty
to trample on Christ's blood, and yet be washed
in it from the guilt of sin; that you may here
have leave to serve the devil, and yet receive
from Christ the wages he gives his faithfull ser-
vants; that you may be allowed to love creatures
more than GOD, and yet GOD loves thee with
his dearest love; that you may live without grace
and yet when you dye be received into glory.*
Would you indeed make such terms as these,
if left to thy own choice? You could not
surely be so foolish, so basely disingenious;
if not, then come in and submit to the con-
ditions offered thee, than which you cannot,
if you be well in your senses, wish for any
more suited to thy interest. Hearken then
to

to the free and affectionate invitations of Christ
*To every one that thirsteth, let him come and
 drink, and whosoever will, let him take of the
 water of life freely, Isai. lv. Rev. xxi. 7.*
 Give not Christ cause to complain over thee
 that thou wouldst not come to Him that
 you might have life; that He would have
 gathered thee as a hen gathereth her chick-
 ens, but thou wouldst not. Oh, what a cut-
 ting thought will this be in hell, to remem-
 ber at how cheap a rate you might have esca-
 ped that misery, but wouldst not; how ea-
 sily, how certainly you might have been
 happy for ever, but you would not. The
 way was shewn thee, you was exhorted and
 besought again and again to walk in that way
 but you would not hearken; Christ would
 have been your saviour but you would have
 none of Him, being in the number of
 those rebellious ones, who would not that
 He should reign over them. And how ut-
 terly inexcusable will you be at the day of
 accounts, when you shall be asked what rea-
 son you had for not receiving the Lord Je-
 sus Christ, when he freely offered to have sa-
 ved thee? What answer will you then make?
 What though you had not wit or learning
 to improve for Christ, nor an estate to lay
 out for Him, yet had you not a will to em-
 brace Him and his tenders? Could you not
 have here loved Him, and have given up
 B yourself

yourself to Him? Could men or devils, or any thing but thy own wretched obstinacy, have hindred this? Ignorance you cannot pretend, for you have been many times assured, and let me once more assure thee, that if you are willing Christ is willing; yea, he is earnestly desirous of your happiness, He calls upon thee, that thou mayest turn and live; He hath set himself full in the way to prevent thy damnation, so that you cannot go to hell but you must trample him under your feet, who stands betwixt to keep thee thence. If now at this instant you will comply with the design of Christ to serve thee, in the way He hath established, He will surely perform all his promises to thee. But beware of deceiving thyself, pretending you are willing to receive the Lord Jesus Christ, whilst in your actions and conversations you refuse to be subject to Him, for the tenour of your life will be sure to follow the bent of your heart, if the temptations of satan ordinarily prevail with thee against the commands of Christ; does he not possess thy heart who can thus put thee upon action? If you follow your pleasures and worldly business to the neglect of God, is it not plain you love the world and the flesh more than God and holiness? Can you be diligent to please those whom you hate, and to injure and grieve such as love you best? these are too gross pretences, your own conscience

is convinced of their vanity and falshood. If you consent that Christ alone shall be your saviour, you will depend upon Him only for salvation: If you are willing He should govern thee in the course of your life, you will yeild obedience to Him. If you say you have not power, examine, I pray thee, what does this mean, but that you are absolutely unwilling, and then whose fault is that? Who is it that hinders you from being willing? On whom dost thou think to lay the blame? Be assured the holy God will clear himself, if you would lay the cause of thy damnation on Him, as if He would not give thee grace enough to change thy heart; thou didst not improve that measure of grace which was given you; thou didst wilfully resist and keep out what was farther offered to you; and you will find small relief or comfort in laying the fault on the devil, or your companions and acquaintance; your accusations of them will be far from acquitting yourself; they shall dearly answer for what they have done, but you will still be left liable to justice; nay you will be found to belye the devil himself, if you say he was the *chief cause* of your *ruin*; for never could he have deceived and undone you, if you had not been willing to hearken and be deluded by Him; nor could your companions have drawn you to sin; if you

had not first been in love with it ; for neither they nor the tempter, whose instruments they were, could thus prevail with them, whose hearts were against it. Neither will it excuse *thy rejection of the Lord Jesus Christ*, to say you never had sufficient reason given to draw you to Him ; and that you never heard of any such advantage to be had by Him as might allure you ; for you shall then be made to acknowledge, that in the thing itself there was abundant reason for your acceptance of Him ; and if it did not prove sufficient to work upon thee, why was this ? Was the gospel unreasonable, or you, in so slighting it ? Was it hid from you ? if so, was it not because you did permit the *God of this world to blind your mind*, and keep you from the knowledge of the truth ? If you are still in the dark, is it not because you love darkness more than light ? Are you not so fully bent upon the satisfaction of thy desires, that you will hear of nothing that should draw you from them ? Are you not too slothfull and negligent, seriously to consider your sin and danger, the love of Christ, and your need of Him ? The meditation whereof thro' the working of God's grace, would soften your heart, and bow your will to a thorough compliance with Him : And do you indeed think your wilful ignorance will be allowed a sufficient

plea for the neglect of your duty? If when you set your servant to work in your shop he should shut up your windows to keep out the sun, or purposely put out his candle, and then pretend he could not see to do his work would you take this for a good excuse? And are not you doing thus when you will not hearken to the word without, when you put out the light of conscience, that candle of the Lord within you, by which you might be led to Christ? And then you cry, you cannot find the way to Him: If a man should send a proclamation to rebels, promising pardon to those who would come in, if they stop their ears when it is read, will it excuse them afterwards, to say they never heard any invitations to lay down their arms.

Nor can you truly say that the Lord Jesus Christ requires harder things of you than this *willingness of heart to be saved by him*, for was you once brought to this, whatever else he requires from you, would appear easy, easy as for a hungry man to eat, or a dutifull child to please a loving father: To do his will then would be your delight; you would find a new nature within you, carrying you forth with a mighty power and sweetness to all acts of obedience.

But yet further, suppose a nobleman should offer to a beggar, that if she would put off her rags and wash herself, and put on the

apparel he had provided and leave her vagrant
 life to come and dwell with him and be
 his loving and faithful wife, he would marry her
 and make her a partner in all his honours and
 riches, would you say there was any thing requi-
 red of this woman besides her willingness to be-
 come his wife? I hope to throw away her rags,
 and leave her wandring companions, and live
 like a person of honour, does not look like the
 paying a portion, or doing difficult work: And
 this is your very case: Poor and naked the Lord
 Jesus finds you, or covered only with rags and
 filthiness; these he bids you put off, wash thee,
 make thee clean, and forsake thy sinful courses
 and companions, in order to put on thee the
 white robes which He hath provided for you; to
 be cloathed with his perfect righteousness, that
 the guilt of your sins may not appear, and to be
 adorned with the graces of his spirit, that you
 may be lovely in the sight of God. He offers to
 espouse thee to Himself, and become thy husband
 and make thee a jointure of heaven itself, if you
 will continue in love and faithfulness to Him all
 all your days. Where then is the dowry that
 must be given Him? He asks for none; 'tis
 thyself He desires, and bids thee come boldly,
 without money or price. What easier terms,
 what fairer offers would you desire? Shall I then
 prevail with you or not? As *Abraham* sent his
 servant to seek a wife for his son *Isaac*, so do I now
 address myself to you, from my Lord and master
 Jesus Christ; earnestly with *St. Paul* desiring to
 espouse thee to Him as a chaste virgin; with
 commission from Him I make these tenders to
 thee. Behold, this hour a message of infinite

concern is sent to thee. Christ Jesus, the King of Glory, offers himself with all he is and hath to thee, and by me his servant, thy consent is now demanded; what is your answer? Is it the same that *Rebekah* gave to *Abraham's* servant, *Gen. xxiv. 58.* I will go with the man, I will be espoused to Christ: If you say no, God that stands over you, will witness, thy own conscience will witness, yea, I shall witness against thee, that Christ did freely offer Himself and salvation to thee, and thou didst perversely reject Him; but God forbid you should do thus foolishly. In the bowels of Christ let me beseech thee, not to turn the deaf ear to this message; do not read these things slightly, as if they concerned thee not, but ponder awhile and let thy thoughts dwell upon the matter: If there is not all the reason in the world for what I urge you to, slight it and spare not: but examine things well, and see you contradict not your own reason, and ruin thyself by inconsideration. Once again then. I ask you, are you willing to betroth yourself to Christ, to be faithfull and constant in thy love and obedience to your life's end? If you say, you are and hope, by God's grace, you ever shall be, doubt not but your resolution is accepted and ratified in heaven; what you have done this hour will be recorded by God Himself and remembered for ever. Make haste to your private chamber, there more expressly and solemnly to profess this your engagement to the Lord Jesus Christ, and to pray for his all-sufficient grace, that you may continue stedfast and immoveable in it.

5. Let me intreat you, consider *the advantages*

you

you will by this means receive from the Lord Jesus Christ. If you ask me what these are, I must answer, so great that I cannot tell you, such as you must not, cannot fully know till you are possesst of them: He that was perfectly acquainted with them all, might spend all eternity in revealing them, for so long shall the true Christian be enjoying them. But I am able out of the book of God, to tell so much of the benefits you will gain by receiving the Lord Jesus Christ, as will certainly persuade, if you are ruled by the truest reason. In one word then, be assured you shall have all that can make you truly happy in this world and the next. This is his own promise, *Psal. lxxxiv. 11.* For the Lord God is a sun and sheild, the Lord will give grace and glory: No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly. *Rom. viii. 28.* And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God. What can you wish for more? *That very day in which your soul is thoroughly brought over to Christ you have a right, by virtue of his own promise, to all in heaven and earth, that may be for your good; you shall enjoy it as you come to need it, and art made meet to receive it.* So soon as by faith you are united to Christ, the guilt of all your former sins is taken away; thy services for the future are accepted, and thine imperfections forgiven, for God is become thy reconciled father; He will love, own, and bless thee, as his child. And can you want any thing if God is your father, who owneth all things? All his attributes, his wisdom, power, truth, and goodness, will be engaged in your behalf, and

and employed for you; his works, his word, and all his providence shall secure and set forward your happiness! all your outward affairs, your heavenly father, who knows what you have need of, will overlook at all times; he will so dispose of, and provide for you, as shall be most for your advantage; no affliction shall befall you, but will prove a medicine for your soul; in all estates and conditions God will direct and preserve you, and if you maintain your integrity, neither men nor devils shall prevail against you; the holy Ghost will be with you, and in you, to enlighten, sanctify, and guide, to comfort you in trouble, to assist you in duties, and to seal you to everlasting happiness: When you die, the Lord Jesus will receive your spirit, preserve you from the roaring lion and the pit of destruction, and vouchsafe you the beginning of happiness with Himself, which shall be compleated at the great day, when you shall be publicly owned by that Christ, whose person and cause you did here embrace; by Him you shall be openly justified from all accusations of satan or the law, and be presented pure and holy in the presence of the Father, to be eternally blessed in all the enjoyments of those treasures of infinite love, which God hath reserved in heaven for believers. This is the inheritance you will come to by receiving the Lord Jesus Christ; you will be made an heir of God; yea, a coheir with his own son, to enter into his joy, and abide with Him for ever; then at length you shall know all the designs of divine wisdom and love, when they shall be accomplished in you and for you; and by the fruiti-
tion

tion you shall understand what is that exceeding and eternal weight of glory for which such wonderful contrivances were made, such solemn preparations, by that God, who doth all things like Himself, being infinitely wise and good. Then shall you reach to, and find those glorious things, which it was neither lawful nor possible for angels or men to utter: To be short, you shall then be advanced to the utmost possible perfection of thy nature; your soul shall be fitted for those actions and employments which are most suitable to it, even the loving and praising thy Maker, saviour and sanctifier; and you shall feel thyself encompassed with the warm embraces of his dearest love; and as this your blessedness shall be infinite and unspeakable, so shall it be eternal.

And some beginnings of this divine life and happiness are brought into the soul whilst it is made in a measure conformable to God, and carried out after Him with the strong workings of love and desire; whilst it feels the shedding abroad of his love in itself, and lives in joyful expectation of an advancement to the perfection of bliss.

And now, if you believe all this (which you must unless you take the scripture for a lye) I would know of thee, whether the invitations Christ makes you to come to Him, are not backed with sufficient motives to prevail with all that are not quite beside themselves in matters of the greatest moment.

By this time, I hope, you plainly see that the Lord Jesus Christ seeks thy interest, whilst He is so importunate with thee; that it is only to make

make thee blessed for ever; for this he commands, for this He beseeches thee: And shall such commands be disobeyed? Shall such requests be denied? How strange a thing is this? That man, a reasonable being, whose wisdom sets Him above all other creatures on earth, should thus be wooed, thus intreated to be happy, and yet stand dallying whether He had best be so or not; yea, that He should preemptorily refuse to be so. Which are we most to admire in this case, the distraction and the base ingratitude of man, or the inconceivable mercy and patience of God, so long to bear with such unworthy creatures, so frequently to renew the offers of blessedness, and even to press it upon them? Well then, do you see there is any gain in godliness? Is there enough of advantage to receive from the Lord Jesus Christ to make him worth accepting? For that I again repeat, is all that is expected from you; be but cordially willing to take Him and all His benefits together, and for certain all shall be thine; you shall find every promise of the book of God made good to your comfort; yea you shall find ten thousand times more than ever you could conceive from the fullest promises the highest expression you ever met with concerning the privileges of believers.

Now shall all this bring you to be one of that number or not? Do you know where to make more advantage for yourself? If so, take your own course, for be assured the Lord Jesus Christ needs not you; His glory by no means depends on your subjection to Him; do as you will, he knows how to secure his own interest, yet fain He would persuade you to take pity on yourself and

and save your own soul ; if there be any one in all the world that hath done more for you than Christ, or that will do more, hearken to Him : but before you conclude there is any such, examine matters well, and then do as you see meet. Indeed the case is so plain, that the veriest child may know how to decide it ; for what are you like to have from the world, from the service of the devil, or from any thing that would keep you from receiving the Lord Jesus Christ ? Can you think the satisfying of your senses, the pleasing your fancy, or living in idleness and wantonness, in pride and pomp, with the applause of the world, is better than the love of God ; better than the fulness of joy to be had in his presence, than the rivers of pleasure at his right-hand for evermore ; But be they as good as they will, do you think they will always last ? Hath the devil any future reward for his servants when their miserable slavery in this life is ended. Amongst all his temptations did he ever promise that he would make you happy for-ever ? Is it possible for you to be ignorant that the *pleasures of sin*, besides their emptiness, are but for a season ? So if you remain without Christ, you have nothing to trust to that will not miserably deceive your expectations : Look round about you, and see if you can find any other foundation to build upon ; and when you have considered with that seriousness which becomes one who desires to do himself good, sure I am, the language of your soul will be like that of *Peter*. *Joh. vi. 68. Lord, whither shall I go ? thou hast the words of eternal life. Thou only hast revealed it.*

Thou

Thou alone directest to it, Thou only hast purchased it, and Thou alone canst bestow it upon thy people; wherefore to Thee Lord I betake myself, renouncing all things that stand in competition with Thee, be Thou my Lord, let me be Thy servant, let me live to Thee here, and let me live with Thee forever partaking of that glory which Thou hast obtained of the Father for thy faithfull ones.

What do you say? Does your heart agree to these words or not? Say yes or no before you read on; I am sure you can have nothing like a reason to give why you should not say, Lord, I come to Thee. Oh! give not Christ cause to wonder at thy obstinacy and unbelief. Once again, I assure you, he will not rule over Thee to your hurt: think not you shall lose by him because he calls you to self-denial and bearing the cross; if he would take you from any thing that is dear to you, 'tis because it is hurtful; and he will give you better delights than those he calls you from; you shall part with nothing which you could have kept long, but instead of it thou shalt receive a treasure that never shall be taken from thee.

But if you are so fast bound to your profits, your pleasures, and your sweet sins, that you turn a deaf ear to all those intreaties, if this is your resolution, that *Baal* shall be your God, and him you will worship; that the world shall be your portion, and to it you will cleave, remember you have had your choice; the Lord Jesus Christ tendered himself and all his saving mercies to you, but thou didst deliberately prefer other things before him, and therefore you

have no wrong done you if you go without him if this be your thanks to him for his matchless condescension in inviting you to glory, grudge not, if hereafter he exclude you from it. And now get thee to thy idols, which so engrossed your heart, that there was no room for Christ except he would take the leavings of the world and the flesh, which, be it known to thee, he never will. Go thy way, make the best of your idols, your riches, your worldly joys, and empty honours; suck all the sweetness they will yeild and keep them as long as you can; but know when you see where they leave you, and into what a state they have brought you, you will then clearly understand what an offer you refused to accept.

6. And lastly, Consider the *sad effect that will be sure to follow your rejection of the Lord Jesus Christ*. If God be just and true, you are not like to go unpunished with the guilt of this most heinous sin on your soul: If you stand out against the mercy that is so freely offered, you will be as miserable a creature, both body and soul, as ever saw the sun. Make as light of these threatnings as you will, but if there is a God in heaven, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, they will be made good, as thy will shortly feel, to thy everlasting sorrow, if your speedy conversion prevent it not. Think not, I take any delight to dig in the bowels of hell, and throw flashes of fire in your face; no, but I would fain, if possible, prevent your misery, by discovering what it will be, if you throw yourself headlong into it. And Oh! that I could speak any thing that might
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make some impression upon thee; to convince thee what a destructive thing that sin is, which yet you are so deeply in love with. Even during this life, whilst you are without Christ, your condition is most sad, however you may rejoice in worldly goods, for you are all this while under the guilt of all the sins you ever committed, in thought, word, or deed, since you came into the world; the least of which, without pardoning mercy, would drown thee in perdition. You have no certainty even for an hour of any of those things which you possess, but are liable to as short warning as the rich fool in the gospel who was called away in that very night wherein he bid his soul take his ease, eat, drink and be merry; for you cannot shew any true title, by virtue of a promise from God, to the least of all your comforts; but you stand always exposed to that wrath which you are treasuring up for yourself against the day of wrath. You lie wholly at his mercy, whom you are daily provoking to anger. In all your ways, which are so defiled, the holy God beholds thee as an abomination upon the earth; and he alone knows how short a time he is determined to bear with thee; *thy glass is running, His patience is drawing to an end, death and judgement are hastning, hell is already burning, and you cannot secure a moment's safety.* Whilst you are sleeping or wakeing, eating or working, talking and laughing, the heavy doom hangs over your head; every day you have reason to expect the dreadful vengeance of the Lord to seize upon you nothing but meer mercy hath kept it off thus long, and mercy will not always last; at night

when you go to bed it is a great hazard but you wake in flames; when you go out of doors, it is a question whether you may not go to your own place before you return home; for ought you know this may be the last warning you ever shall have; think a little whether this is a comfortable case for a man to continue in. Moreover, in all the troubles you may meet with in this world, I know not what support may be administered to you; there is none to be given you from God, I am sure, whilst you reject the Lord Jesus Christ: What shift you make to get ease and relief at such a time, I cannot but wonder; only the remnants of thy worldly comforts, and the hope of seeing things better, may help you to some false peace; but alas! poor man, *death* will shortly arrest thee, *death* will strip thee of all thy heart delighted in, *death* will frustrate all your expectations, *death* will carry thee out of this thy beloved world, into a place to which thou hast been an utter stranger, not thinking of it at all, or but coldly and seldom, or with horror and averſeness: Death, I say, will shortly lay hold of you, and then whither wilt thou look for comfort, thou despiser of the Lord Jesus Christ? Into whose hands will you commend your departing soul? Can you expect the Lord Jesus should receive you *dying*, who wouldst by no means be persuaded to receive him, when he offered himself to you? What; can you expect He will receive a rebel into the kingdom of peace. An earthly, sensual, devilish soul, into the communion of saints? No never expect it; and if he will not receive thee, who must? If heaven
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may not hold thee, what place will? You can easily answer these questions. And when by a resurrection to condemnation you are compelled with all the rest to stand in the presence of your judge, how will you appear before Him? for the Lords sake, yea, for your own sake, tho' you love not Christ, nor the sanctifying work of his holy spirit, put these questions home to your heart; now ask yourself what you will then say to the Lord Jesus Christ, for this your contempt and dislike of his person and government? Dare you then justify your unbelief and impenitence, when he calls upon you to answer for it? Or whom will you get to plead for you, when the only advocate shall condemn thee? Of whom will you make a friend, when he who alone could and would have been so, through thy incorrigible fault, is become thy greatest enemy? Dare angels or saints speak a word for you, against whom their Lord shall speak? Or would they if they durst? No, they will approve his righteous sentence. Will the devil take your part? Hath he any power, do you think, to secure his captives? No, it is he that is thy accuser, rejoicing rather to aggravate those sins, into which he tempted you, than to excuse them: Or dost thou expect relief from your companions in misery? Ah! poor creatures, they would rather help themselves, if they could, but cannot: Oh! then with what a heart, with what a countenance, will you hear that sentence, Depart from me yea cursed, when you shall look round about and see no help, no hope, but that you must lye down forever in that burning lake, which the breath of

the Lords fury, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle, And when thou hast lain thousands of of years in that place of torments, what will be the workings of your heart, when you have felt that tribulation and anguish which comes upon those that work evil, what thoughts will you have of the ways that brought you thither? What would you not do for the least hope in this miserable state, for the least glimmering of light in that gloomy darkness? But there is none to be had, no nor ever will through a whole *eternity*; the force of which word eternity, and the meaning of hell, is then known and felt in another manner, then when careless sinners could laugh at the mention of them, or be offended to hear them dwell on. But perhaps you cannot persuade yourself there are any torments prepared for unbelievers. If not, it is to be feared you are one of those unbelievers for whom they are prepared. Now indeed all this is but talk, *hell* is out of sight, and the most just description of its torments but wind, and therefore we find so little care in the world to make sure of his favour, who can save us from this misery. If the Lord Jesus Christ would shew heaven and hell plainly to their eye-sight, probably sinners would be awakened; but this he will not do, neither is there cause he should; for as we are made men to be ruled by reason, why should he deal with us like brutes, that must be led by their senses? Yet because he will not take this way with them brutish sinners reject and despise him. But alas! when you see all the world stand before him, and behold that burning lake into which all must be cast

cast who have not a part in his love; then you will see what benefit comes by the Lord Jesus Christ; then will you no longer count them fools who judged it their first and greatest business to secure an interest in him. Then, if the most passionate wishes would do you any good, if the bitterest cries for mercy might prevail, you would think them well spent; but, alas! all will be to no purpose, Though you cry Lord, Lord, with never so much earnestness, if you was here a worker of iniquity, no other answer will you obtain, but depart from me, I know ye not. And you yourself will be forced to acknowledge this sentence to be no less just than it is terrible: for did not you here bid Christ *depart from you, by not desiring the knowledge of his ways*: And is it not just he should then command you to depart from him as one he will not own? Heaven you refused when you refused submission to the Lord Jesus Christ and you was told so again and again, and therefore you must needs fall into hell, since there is no third place provided,

But perhaps you will flatter yourself none of these things shall come upon you, because you put your trust, and rely upon your Saviour to be kept from hell and the power of the devil. *Beware*, I beseech you, how you cheat yourself into that misery from whence no wile can bring you back. Dost thou trust God will take you into heaven, who allow yourself in those very sins for which he hath threatned to cast men into hell? If so, it is some promise you ground your trust upon else it is a vain confidence. Now shew me one promise in the whole book of God, that
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gives you the least ground to hope for happiness whilst you continue in your sins: But I can shew you a thousand texts of scripture, where wrath is threatned to all unconverted sinners, continuing such: so that plainly your trust in God is a wretched presumption, that he will be so mercifull to falsify his word and deny himself to save you; and if indeed his word prove false, then your confidence will not deceive you: *but if the word of God prove true*, then notwithstanding thy pretended trust, nothing remains for you but indignation and wrath. And of the very same stamp is your reliance on Christ, whilst you are rebelling against him; for does the gospel ever once say, *That every man who believes Christ will save him, shall be served, let his heart be what it will.* Never did Christ or his apostles affirm any such thing; and if your faith is grounded on any other gospel then Christ hath revealed, you must seek another heaven than he hath promised; for he hath told you plainly. that without holiness you shall never see the Lord; that he is the author of salvation, only to those that obey him; and that he takes off condemnation from none but such who walk not after the flesh. but after the spirit. Now if you do truly believe in Christ, you will set yourself to seek for happiness in the way he hath appointed, not in one of your own devising, else it is a proof you do not depend upon him for salvation, but on your own fancy, or Satan's delusions; following their directions, and not the directions of Christ. If you had some dangerous disease, and a physician should tell that if you would depend on him, he would re-

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cover you, and for this end should leave a medicine with you; if in the mean time some one else should direct you to an easier way, and you throw away those medicines, do you depend upon this physician for a cure.

Thus the Lord Jesus Christ, the great physician of souls, assures you, if you will depend on him, he will keep you from everlasting death; to this purpose he sends his word and spirit to cure thee of thy ignorance and wickedness, to bring thee to repentance, and thoroughly purify thy heart; but this you think a tedious course, and fancy you may be saved without so much ado, and that by reliance on Christ. But is this wise to rely on the physician for health, and yet throw away the physick that should procure it? I know you would have the Lord Jesus Christ keep you from hell- yet give you liberty to live in sin; that is, let you carry fire in your bosom, but keep you from being burnt; let you drink poison, yet keep it from destroying you. But, know O man. the Lord never came into the world for any such ends; this grace indeed he hath purchased. *that no sins great or small, shall damn that man that comes to him for pardon with a truly contrite spirit, that forsakes them and is made holy in heart and life*; but not that he who lives in sin should escape misery, which is indeed an impossibility. For man is in bondage, and sin is his fetters? now the Son would make us free and set the captive at liberty, but must he not then take off his fetters? We are polluted, and sin is our filth, Christ is the fountain opened for our cleansing: And can we be clean if we will not be purged from our filthiness? We are slaves to sa-

tan thro' our sins; Christ would deliver us from from this slavery; but must he not then break these chains? Sin is the spawn or seed. hell is the fruit and off spring, and if the seed be permitted to grow, must there not needs be the fruit? All this plainly shews that man destroys himself whilst he will hug his sins, as serpents in his bosom, and yet presuming they will not sting him.

Man by sin deserved everlasting wrath, the Lord Jesus Christ came to save him from sin, and so from wrath. But if men will not believe he came to this purpose, or will not improve his grace for that most noble end; must they not die in their sins, and so abide under that wrath? *Job. viii. 24. Acts iv. 12.*

Excessive love to our bodies, and to the comforts of this life and want of delight in God, is the great misery of a soul, and engages in such contention, as kindles the unquenchable fire, and if men will not implore the spirit of Christ to turn the bent and inclination of their hearts from the world to God, do they not retain certain misery Thus you may see how impossible it is even in the thing itself for those, who receive not the Lord Jesus Christ, to escape damnation.

And know moreover your condemnation will be much more heavy, than it would have been if the Lord had never come into the world, or had never offered to you his mercy. Can you think that you who have been pressed by so many arguments to accept of Christ, shall escape as easily as those who never heard of him? Why doth Christ denounce such woes against Chorazin and Bethsaida, threatening them with worse punishments than Sodom and Gomorrah? Was it

not because they enjoyed more mercies, and greater means for repentance? Do we not read, *Heb.* xii. 25. that they who refuse to hear the Son speaking from heaven, shall much less escape than those who refused to hear the prophets of old, and of a sorer punishment whereof they are worthy? it had therefore been better for you never to have heard one word of the way to salvation by Jesus Christ, than haveing heard, to slight and disregard it.

Every sermon you have heard and neglected, will so much the more increase your torment. Be you well assured though God be the author of mercies, yet he takes account of the mercies he affords his creatures, and how they improve them and if intirely abused, they shall be severely reckoned for.

Above all, how will the love of Christ make your doom more sad, who have not been constrained by it? What punishment can be great enough for such ingratitude. If you be one of that number, I dare even appeal to yourself whether you deserve not, for your unbelief and impenitence, greater sufferings than if Christ had never died? If you are guilty of perfidiousness and ingratitude against God thy maker, and Jesus Christ thy redeemer, will not your own conscience conclude it most just that the heaviest judgements should be thy portion? Was you not liable to death, to all kind of misery for your sin? Did not the son of God humble himself to take on him your nature, and die a most shameful and cursed death to purchase your pardon? And yet when he offers it upon condition of thy acceptance of him
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for your Saviour, you are so far from complying, that you rather take encouragement from this mercy offered you by the Lord, to continue in disobedience; which is to offer the greatest possible injury to to your Saviour, to make him, as it were, the patron of your wickedness. Thus you do far worse even then they who crucified him, whilst you endeavour to pervert the end of his death, which was to redeem from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

By this time, I hope, you are convinced there is abundant reason why you should receive the Lord Jesus Christ, to give you the salvation he hath prepared for his people in the way that he himself hath prescribed.

And now after all again, I demand of you, whether you will consent that the Lord Jesus Christ, shall be your Saviour, and take his own method to keep you from misery, and bring you to true blessedness? Are you resolved to give up yourself to him, and follow his Directions or not? Do you think it better to go from Christ hereafter than to come to him for salvation here? Can you bear this indignation rather than his easy yoke and light burden? Is there any thing in becoming Christs faithful servant more than in being the devils everlasting slave? *While you have leisure, cease not from these thoughts, till you come to have a true sense of the things which concern you, and are firmly resolved, without farther excuse or delay, to bind yourself over to the Lord Jesus Christ, by a firm covenant to be wholly His, never to depart from him, but in all things sincerely desiring to be guided by him, that you may escape the misery your sins expose you to, and obtain that glory, to which he will assuredly bring you.*

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